



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

House Bill 5050
An Act Modernizing the Symbol of Access for Persons with Disabilities.

Testimony of Jonathan Slifka
Office of Governor Dannel P. Malloy

Government Administration & Elections Committee
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Good afternoon Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, Senator McLachlan, Representative Smith and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee. My name is Jonathan Slifka and I am the Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community. I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony **in support of House Bill 5050, An Act Modernizing the Symbol of Access for Persons with Disabilities.**

Modernizing the symbol of access is a vital step in the evolution of disability action and disability awareness. For many years, the prevailing attitude towards the disability community was that we were by and large a static and sedentary group. We are not static and sedentary. We are workers, business owners, parents, volunteers, and community activists. We come to the State Capitol to testify on the issues that are most important to us. With the hard work of our community, that attitude has evolved over the years to reflect a far more active community. The proposed modern symbol is a reflection of our active community, unlike the current symbol we recognize today. Furthermore, the changing of the language from "handicapped" to "reserved" reflects a clear understanding that these spaces are reserved explicitly for those who have the required placard.

Additionally, the changing of the symbol will stir up more awareness from the able-bodied community. Far too often and for far too long, the current, static symbol has gone ignored by many in the able-bodied community who seem to park in these spaces or use these accessible bathroom stalls in the interest of convenience. Changing the symbol will catch people's attention and remind them that the disability community does not park in these spaces or use these stalls in the interest of convenience, but rather necessity. That alone may cause some people to think twice before parking in these spaces illegally.

New York has already moved forward with this change and it's time for Connecticut to make the change, as well. Some businesses here in Connecticut have already made this change on their own. I urge this committee to move this forward so that Connecticut can join New York in leading the nation in the continuing evolution of disability awareness and action.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.